

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

On page 12, lines 20-27, please replace the paragraph as filed, with the following paragraph as amended:

Extending distally from the T-shaped handle 30 is an elongate shaft 28. While the shaft 28 can have a variety of sizes, as shown it has a diameter that is less than the diameter of the distractor. Additionally, the shaft 28 can have a guide feature (not shown) [[32]] that corresponds to the guide feature 18 on the distractor 12. That is, the guide feature [[32]] can be either protruding or recessed, and have a variety of shapes, such as C-shaped with two opposed sides that can be either straight or curved. While the guide feature [[32]] can be formed throughout the entire length of the shaft 28 or on a partial length thereof, as shown, the groove [[32]] is formed throughout the entire length of the shaft 28.

On page 13, lines 11-23, please replace the paragraph as filed, with the following paragraph as amended:

Extending distally from the handle of the inserter 46 is an elongate shaft. While the shaft 52 can have a variety of configurations, the shaft 52 can also optionally include a guide feature (not shown) [[50]] that corresponds to the guide feature 18 on the distractor 12, such that the inserter 46 can be mated to the distractor 12. Thus, depending upon the configuration of the guide feature 18 on the distractor 12, the guide feature [[50]] on the inserter 46 can be either protruding or recessed, and can be, for example, C-shaped with two opposed sides that are either straight or curved. Moreover, the guide feature [[50]] on the inserter 46 can be formed either throughout the entire length of the shaft 52 or on a partial length of the shaft 52. Alternatively, the inserter may simply be guided by a flat surface on the shaft 14 and/or paddle 22 on the distractor 12 or by an external feature of the shaft 14 such as, for example, its superior and/or inferior surfaces. Removably mated to the distal most end of the shaft 52 is an implant 48, various embodiments of which will be discussed below.

On page 14, lines 1-10, please replace the paragraph as filed, with the following paragraph as amended:

Following distraction of the cavity 42, the filler bar 26 can be removed from the distractor 12 to decrease the amount of space that the assembly 10 requires in order to make room for further tools and/or implants as well as to improve the surgeon's ability to visualize the cavity. As shown in FIGS. 7 to 8, an inserter 46 can then be slidably guided by the distractor 12. Specifically, the surgeon slidably mates the guide features 18, [[32]], if any, on the distractor 12 and the inserter 46 to one another, and the inserter 46 is slid distally along the distractor 12 into the intervertebral space 42. Once the inserter 46 is placed within the cavity 42, the implant 48 can then be maneuvered so as to achieve the desired orientation.